

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of transferring a first host identity between a first host system and a second host system, wherein the first host system is configured initially with the first host identity, the second host system is configured initially with a second host identity and a host identity can belong to only one host system at a time, the method comprising:
 - an administrator system, that is operable to hold an additional host identity, passing the additional host identity to the first host system,
 - the first host system reconfiguring itself to use the additional host identity and passing the first host identity to the administrator system;
 - the administrator system passing the first host identity to the second host system, and
 - the second host system reconfiguring itself to use the first host identity.
- 10 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the administrator system is operable to hold a pool of host identities for use as additional host identities.
- 15 3. The method of claim 2, further comprising passing the second host identity to the administrator system.
- 20 4. The method of claim 3, wherein the second host identity is placed in the pool for use as an additional host identity.
- 25 5. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - the administrator system connecting to the first host system and passing the second host identity to the first host system, and

- the first host system reconfiguring itself to use the second host identity and passing the additional host identity back to the administrator system.
6. The method of claim 5, the administrator system is operable to hold a pool of
- 5 host identities for use as additional host identities.
7. The method of claim 6, wherein the additional host identity is placed back in the pool for subsequent use as an additional host identity.
- 10 8. The method of claim 1, wherein the first host system includes a host identity repository.
9. The method of claim 8, wherein the host identity repository of the first host system is configured to hold a plurality of host identities.
- 15 10. The method of claim 1, wherein the second host system includes a host identity repository.
11. The method of claim 10, wherein the host identity repository of the second host system is configured to hold a plurality of host identities.
- 20 12. The method of claim 1, wherein the administrator system logs the host identity transfer.
- 25 13. The method of claim 1, wherein the administrator system is operable to monitor progress of the host identity transfer.
14. The method of claim 1, wherein the transfer of host identities is effected via a secure connection.

15. The method of claim 1, wherein the transfer of host identities is effected via encoded messages.
- 5 16. The method of claim 15, wherein the messages are encoded using a predetermined parameter and an encryption algorithm.
17. The method of claim 1, wherein the host identities are used for software licensing.
- 10 18. The method of claim 1, wherein the first and second host systems are each respective service processors in multi-computer system.
19. The method of claim 18, wherein at least one said service processor is operable to allocate host identities to respective ones of a plurality of sub-systems.
- 15 20. The method of claim 19, wherein said at least one service processor is a shelf service processor for a shelf of a rack mountable blade system and at least one said sub-system is a processor blade receivable in the shelf.
- 20 21. The method of claim 1, wherein the administrator system is a system management server for a blade system.
- 25 22. A method of allocating host identities to host subsystems, wherein a management subsystem manages the allocation of the host identities to the host subsystems, the method comprising:
 - the management subsystem holding at least one spare host identity; and

- where a new host identity is to be allocated to a host subsystem, the management subsystem allocates a spare host identity to the host subsystem.
- 5 23. The method of claim 22, wherein the first and second host systems are each respective service processors in multi-computer system.
24. The method of claim 23, wherein at least one said service processor is operable to allocate host identities to respective ones of a plurality of subsystems.
- 10 25. The method of claim 24, wherein said at least one service processor is a shelf service processor for a shelf of a rack mountable blade system and at least one said sub-system is a processor blade receivable in the shelf.
- 15 26. A computer system comprising a first host system configurable with a first host identity, a second host system configurable with a second host identity and an administrator system operable to hold an additional system identity, wherein:
 - the administrator system is operable to connect to the first host system and to passing the additional host identity to the first host system;
 - the first host system is operable to reconfigure itself to use the additional host identity and to pass the first host identity to the administrator system;
 - the administrator system is further operable to connect to the second host system and to pass the first host identity to the second host system; and
 - the second host system is operable to reconfigure itself to use the first host identity.
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27. The computer system of claim 26, wherein the administrator system is operable to hold a pool of host identities for use as additional host identities.
- 5 28. The computer system of claim 27, wherein the second host system is further operable to pass the second host identity to the administrator system
29. The computer system of claim 26, wherein the administrator system is further operable to place the second host identity in the pool for use as an additional host identity.
- 10 30. The computer system of claim 26, wherein:
- the administrator system is further operable to connect to the first host system and to pass the second host identity to the first host system, and
 - the first host system is further operable to reconfiguring itself to use the second host identity.
- 15 31. The computer system of claim 30, wherein the first host system is further operable to pass the additional host identity back to the administrator system.
- 20 32. The computer system of claim 26, the administrator system is operable to hold a pool of host identities for use as additional host identities.
33. The computer system of claim 32, wherein the additional host identity is placed back in the pool for subsequent use as an additional host identity.
- 25 34. The computer system of claim 26, wherein the first host system includes a host identity repository.

35. The computer system of claim 34, wherein the host identity repository of the first host system is configured to hold a plurality of host identities.
- 5 36. The computer system of claim 26, wherein the second host system includes a host identity repository.
37. The computer system of claim 23, wherein the host identity repository of the second host system is configured to hold a plurality of host identities.
- 10 38. The computer system of claim 26, wherein the administrator system is operable to log the host identity transfer.
39. The computer system of claim 38, wherein the administrator system is operable to monitor progress of the host identity transfer.
- 15 40. The computer system of claim 26, wherein the transfer of host identities is effected via a secure connection.
- 20 41. The computer system of claim 26, wherein the transfer of host identities is effected via encoded messages.
42. The computer system of claim 41, wherein the messages are encoded using a predetermined parameter and an encryption algorithm.
- 25 43. The computer system of claim 26, wherein the host identities are used for software licensing.
44. The computer system of claim 26, wherein the first and second host systems are each respective service processors in multi-computer system.

45. The computer system of claim 26, wherein at least one said service processor is operable to allocate host identities to respective ones of a plurality of subsystems.
- 5 46. The computer system of claim 45, wherein said at least one service processor is a shelf service processor for a shelf of a rack mountable blade system and at least one said sub-system is a processor blade receivable in the shelf.
- 10 47. The computer system of claim 26, wherein the administrator system is a system management server for a blade system.
- 15 48. A computer system comprising a plurality of host systems and a management subsystem, the management subsystem being operable to manage the allocation of the host identities to the host subsystems, wherein:
 - the management subsystem is operable to hold at least one spare host identity; and
 - where a new host identity is to be allocated to a host subsystem, the management subsystem is operable to allocate a spare host identity to the host subsystem.
- 20 49. The computer system of claim 48, wherein the first and second host systems are each respective service processors in multi-computer system.
- 25 50. The computer system of claim 48, wherein at least one said service processor is operable to allocate host identities to respective ones of a plurality of subsystems.

51. The computer system of claim 50, wherein said at least one service processor is a shelf service processor for a shelf of a rack mountable blade system and at least one said sub-system is a processor blade receivable in the shelf.
- 5 52. A computer system comprising a first host configurable with a first host identity, a second host configurable with a second host identity and an administrator for holding an additional system identity, wherein:
- means for connecting the administrator to the first host for passing the additional host identity to the first host;
 - means for reconfiguring the first host to use the additional host identity and means for passing the first host identity to the administrator;
 - means for connecting the administrator to the second host for passing the first host identity to the second host; and
 - means for reconfiguring the second host to use the first host identity.
- 10 53. A computer readable medium comprising instructions for causing a first host identity to be transferred between a first host system and a second host system, wherein the first host system is configured initially with the first host identity, the second host system is configured initially with a second host identity and a host identity can belong to only one host system at a time, the instructions being operable to cause:
- an administrator system, that is operable to hold an additional host identity, to connect to the first host system and to pass the additional host identity to the first host system,
 - the first host system to reconfigure itself to use the additional host identity and to pass the first host identity to the administrator system;
 - the administrator system to connect to the second host system and to pass the first host identity to the second host system, and
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- the second host system to reconfigure itself to use the first host identity.
54. A computer system comprising a plurality of host systems and a management subsystem, the management subsystem being operable to manage the allocation of the host identities to the host subsystems, wherein:
- the management subsystem is operable to hold at least one spare host identity; and
 - where a new host identity is to be allocated to a host subsystem, the management subsystem is operable to allocate a spare host identity to the host subsystem.
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